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COMMUNIST CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE MASSES

This is a translation of an article written by K. Zarodov in Agitator, No 12, Moscow, 1959, pages 9-15.

The Communist indoctrination of the workers is the focal center of the activity of our Party, of its ideological institutions, the soviets, the trade unions, the Komsomol, and other public organizations. This is due to a number of exceptionally important circumstances. What are these circumstances?

Our country has embarked on the comprehensive construction of Communist society. The 20th Party Congress has emphasized that not only is a developed material and technical base needed for transition to Communism but also an enlightened citizenry. The recent decree of the Central Committee of the Party "On the actual state of political work and the measures for its improvement on a mass scale among the workers of Stalinskaya Oblast," stemming from the resolutions of the Congress, is a concrete program of ideological work for all the Party organizations of the country.

The fulfillment of the Seven-Year Plan is crucially important for the construction of Communism in our country.

The Soviet people have been called upon to brave not a few frontiers, to storm not a few heights. However, we have never yet had a period that could be compared with the present, in regard both to the volume of work and the depth of the transformations. Just imagine: we are to produce as much industrial output during the coming seven-year period as during all the preceding years of the Soviet regime. We are to raise considerably the living standards of the people and essentially, to predetermine the victory of the USSR in peaceful economic competition with the capitalist countries.

It is understandable that these problems can be resolved only on condition that every Soviet man would know his place in the system and spare no effort to carry out the plans, so that there would be no people working at half their capacity, indifferent to the social good. At times,

one hears: "The Congress has pointed out that the Seven-Year Plan can be fulfilled without overexertion. Then why appeal for the mobilization of effort by the people?" Such conclusions are wrong. A plan requiring no overexertion does not imply that hidden within it are some kind of "reserves" and that it has some kind of "outlets." This plan, which ensures the fulfillment of the goals in all the branches of the economy, enables the plants and factories to work regularly and at full capacity. Moreover we should not forget that the best plan may fall short of fulfillment if carried out in a haphazard manner, and without regard for proper organization.

The immenseness of the Seven-Year Plan of Communist construction requires that the Soviet people clearly envision the road of progress that lies ahead, fully understanding the fact that Communism can win only on the basis of inspired work by the whole nation. V.I. Lenin said:

"The more profound the reorganization which we intend to bring about, the harder we should try to arouse interest in it and an intelligent attitude toward it. We must convince of this need more and more millions and tens of millions of men (Works, Vol. 31, p. 467)."

Lenin's words have a new resonance today, they determine our entire activity.

Higher standards of indoctrination are directly related to the methods used in fulfilling the Seven-Year Plan. Let us recall that in 1965, three-fourths of the growth of industrial production were to be obtained through a rise in the productivity of social labor. This brings to mind another interesting point. The costs of production in industry, construction and transport as well as in the sovkhozes, should be lowered during the seven-year period by about 850 billion rubles, this sum being nearly half of the amount of state capital investments specified by the Plan.

All this cannot be accomplished unless the Communist consciousness of Soviet people, their qualifications and experience are raised to a higher level. Care for the complex mechanization and automation of production, the introduction of conveyers, the replacing of obsolete equipment, skillful and broad utilization of the cheaper kinds of raw materials and electric energy, sustained efforts to improve the quality and lower the costs of production -- such are the golden rules by which every leader, every Soviet citizen should abide.

In speaking of the importance of Communist indoctrination, this is what should also be kept in mind. The total

victory of socialism in our country resulted in highly developed productive forces, science and technology. There are trained cadres in the USSR, capable of resolving the most complicated problems. The country has immense natural resources. In our country, an unprecedented moral and political unity of the workers and the friendship of all Soviet peoples have been attained. This is why now, as never before, our achievements depend on men, on their consciousness and their skill. Using what has been achieved, as a spring-board we must speedily brave new frontiers on our way toward Communism.

Communist indoctrination is an important part of the new historical stage in the development of our Homeland. As is known, during the period of construction of socialism we faced the problem of the reeducation of the masses, of the socialist alteration of their consciousness, morality and conduct. At the present time, we face the problem of Communist education in the proper sense of the word, of the shaping of the consciousness of not only a builder of, but also a resident in, a Communist society. Though there is no boundary line between socialist and Communist consciousness and the same basic traits are typical of both, the maturity of consciousness will be greater under Communism.

What is this concretely reflected in? Let us take the attitude of a man toward labor. Under socialism, labor has not yet become a vital need for all Soviet people. Under Communism all men will work to their full capacity and to the limit of their abilities, and the need to regulate the distribution of the basic products between the members of society will disappear. Serious behavior changes will also occur. Conduct will stem entirely from inner impulses, in conformance with the rules of Communist society, and will not require measures of compulsion, or some kind of special stimuli. People will be much more organized and more cultured.

To develop the ability of millions of men to live and labor in the Communist way is not an easy task. Moreover, it must be remembered that not all Soviet people have a socialist consciousness and that some of them have not yet freed themselves from the "birthmarks" of capitalism. The bearers of the vices of the past poison the wholesome group atmosphere, do harm to the national economy and prevent the construction of Communism.

The tenacity of the vestiges of the past is not due merely to the natural lag of social consciousness behind social being, but also to the fact that alien views from the capitalist world continue to penetrate into our milieu.

The ideologists of imperialism strain themselves to the utmost by juggling the facts, distorting opinions and ideas and resorting to outright deceit to distort Marxism, calumniate the socialist system, its attainments and prospects and at the same time, to extol capitalism and to furbish up its dilapidated edifice.

The bourgeoisie spares neither efforts nor funds for anti-Soviet and anti-Communist propaganda. In the US alone, dozens of organizations engage in dirty slander against us. In this country, there is a government propaganda service called Information Agency, which annually receives 100 million dollars from government coffers. This service has 350 departments and subsections in 79 countries and publishes 51 magazines in 21 languages and 22 newspapers. The anti-Soviet Textbook on Communism is distributed in 80 countries.

Various kinds of reformist and revisionist hangers-on render the bourgeoisie a great service by propagandizing views alien to Marxism-Leninism.

Vestiges of capitalism are doomed, their final liquidation is merely a matter of time. The perfidious plans and inventions of bourgeois propaganda are futile. But not to be mindful of all this would be political heedlessness.

We must wage an active daily struggle against all and sundry vestiges. What is our most important task? First, to instill a conscious, Communist attitude toward labor and public property, to strengthen socialist discipline in social production, to condemn those who would like to get by without doing any useful labor, to expose loafers, profiteers and speculators. Secondly, to combat all manifestations of bourgeois nationalism, national limitations and cosmopolitanism, however "insignificant." Thirdly, to maintain an attitude of intolerance toward any infractions of the moral and ethical norms of socialist communal living -- drunkenness, hooliganism, rudeness to women etc., and also to intensify atheistic propaganda.

The Communist Party attributes particular importance to the bringing up of youth. This is understandable. The young people not only take part in the building of Communism but in the future, they will live in Communist society. Moreover, today's youth has not been schooled in labor and war like the older generation. Our boys and girls know only from books and stories about the terrors of exploitation and the self-sacrifice and difficult struggle of the people in achieving socialism. Mindful of all this, the 21st Party Congress has pointed to the need to stress the spirit of Communism in educating the younger generation, to combine school studies with productive labor, to enable the young people to master the body of scientific knowledge accumulated by man.

What are the basic goals, the chief elements of a Communist upbringing? They are clearly formulated in the documents of the 21st Party Congress. Comrade N.S. Khrushchev said:

"It is the aim of the ideological work of our Party and state to develop new qualities in Soviet people, to educate them in the spirit of collectivism and diligence, socialist internationalism and patriotism, high moral principles of the new society and the spirit of Marxism-Leninism."

We shall briefly discuss every one of these goals.

Indoctrinating the workers with a Communist attitude toward labor and socialist ownership, was the Party's task from the very first days of the Soviet regime. As a result, men endowed with a high labor consciousness, active participants in the construction of a new society, have grown up in the USSR. This is what ensured the victory of socialism. During the period of comprehensive construction of Communism, transition from socialist to Communist labor is to take place. To make the obligation to work a habit and need for all men, we must continue to develop and correctly to combine both the material and the moral incentives and to support creative beginnings, new patriotic doings, the shoots of Communism. Support by the Party of the wonderful movement of brigades of Communist labor is a graphic example of how this problem should be resolved.

An important task is the education of Soviet men in the spirit of socialist internationalism and patriotism. The Soviet man feels a legitimate pride in his Homeland and its successes. This pride is fully deserved and justified. It is known that the world of capitalism has set up incredible difficulties before the first country of socialism, but our men have surmounted everything and are now marching in the vanguard of all humanity into a society whose banner will bear the words: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need!" To be sure, we understand that to be proud does not mean to be swell-headed, does not mean not to have one's feet solidly planted on the ground, or to deny that others have anything that is any good. The Soviet people did not and do not fence themselves off from the capitalist world by an "iron curtain" as bourgeois propaganda obstreperously asserts. We learned and are willing to learn from the capitalist about economic efficiency, should this be of benefit to our cause. But we shall not allow any enemy to hinder our construction; we fought and shall always fight against the hostile bourgeois ideology.

As for the nations of the socialist camp, the working class, the workers of the whole world, we feel the sincere love and respect for them and we do not consider our interests to be separate from theirs. The feelings of proletarian, socialist internationalism always permeated and will permeate the activity of our Party, state and people. Inculcation of these qualities is considered by the Party to be one of its important tasks in the days to come.

Great problems arise in connection with the continued development of such traits in Soviet men, indispensable for members of a Communist society, as the collective spirit, self-reliance and initiative in social and political life, and high cultural and educational standards.

The ideological servants of capitalism have used up stacks of paper to argue that socialism does not satisfy the moral laws of humanity and that moral values, humanism, freedom and individual rights are defended by none other than the bourgeois regime. They even call themselves the representatives of the "free world!" But what good are the "rights of the individual" and "freedom" wherever millions of unemployed stand in a queue for a handout consisting of soup, while a handful of millionaires wallows in gold, where the rate of mortality is highest and where the predatory formula: "Homo homini lupus" holds sway! Socialism repudiates such morality and asserts its diametrical opposite; cooperation and the spirit of collectivism, friendship and mutual help, and care for the nation's common good and for the all-out development of the human personality under conditions of collectivity. It is understandable that all these qualities do not come by themselves, that the instilling of high moral principles has taken and will take not a little strength and time.

The ideological basis of Communist education is Marxism-Leninism. Every Communist, every citizen should be, first and foremost, a man of firm ideological convictions to whom any manifestations of political double-dealing or hypocrisy are naturally distasteful. Such a man should be a staunch opponent of any deviations from the principles of Communism. Marxism-Leninism helps to acquire these qualities and to be guided by this Party position in life. Knowledge of the laws of social development and ability to project their thoughts into the future strengthen the conviction of the Soviet people that the great cause of Communism will win out in the end.

The 21st Party Congress has made a profound contribution to the theoretical working-out of the basic problems of the development of the world socialist system and international relations. The agitator and the propagandist must

constantly consult the documents of Congress and daily explain to the masses that our Party is building its plans on the basis of the great doctrine of Marxism-Leninism in relation to the concrete domestic and international situation.

Having defined the goals of Communist education at the new stage, the 21st Congress also indicated the means to this noble end.

The Congress has emphasized that during the period of comprehensive construction of Communism, the drawing of absolutely all workers into active participation in social production will play a decisive role in changing the living conditions and opinions of men. "The best school, the strictest teacher is life itself, is our Soviet reality," so reads the report of Comrade N.S. Khrushchev. It is in the midst of effervescent life, while striving for the highest possible productivity of labor that man himself, his opinions, character and moral makeup, undergo transformations.

However, it would be wrong to believe that since labor is the basis of education, it would change men by itself, provided they keep occupied, that the development of productive forces, the change in productive relations, would automatically result in the formation of Communist traits, in a Communist Weltanschauung. To be sure, the school of life and work is excellent. But the Marxist-Leninists were never the advocates of the theory of automatism, of spontaneity. On the contrary, they always maintained that the organizing and educational work of the Party should not be underestimated. Only on the basis of a labor and ideological education can the Communist consciousness of men develop successfully. The 21st Party Congress has outlined the measures that will help resolve the historical problem -- how to educate the man of the future.

What are these measures?

First, the progressive improvement of the organization and substance of the propaganda of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and the perfecting of the form and methods of political work on a mass scale. Secondly, the reorganization of the school and the country's entire educational system, increased aid to the family by society and the state in bringing up children (the construction of a large network of children's nurseries, kindergartens, boarding-schools etc). Thirdly, intensification of the educational role of the Soviets, Trade-Unions, the Komsomol, and athletic and other social organizations. Fourthly, the speedy and broad development of all branches of science and culture, particularly, the cinema, the press, radio, television, literature and professional and amateur arts. Fifthly, the shortening of the

work day and the work week, the improvement of public services which lighten labor and give the Soviet people free time for cultural and generally educational growth. Sixthly, the continued progress of democracy, the drawing of all workers into a still more active participation in directing economic and cultural building.

III

One of the most important factors for resolving the problem of Communist education is the intensification of the ideological work of the Party.

In recent years, the Party organizations have accumulated experience in propaganda and agitation, primarily through their connection with life, with the resolution of concrete problems of economic and cultural construction. Many new forms have been prompted by the practice of generalizing production experience. Departments of propaganda and agitation of the Moskovskaya, Leningradskaya, Voronezhskaya, Ryazanskaya, and other Oblast Party Committees, have become genuine headquarters for the widespread inculcation of modern methods of labor.

The composition of the cadres of propagandists and agitators has improved, the ties of leading officials with the working masses have been strengthened. V.I. Lenin said that unless the leaders personally took part in the education of the masses there could be no genuine political activity or organizational work. Lenin himself was an excellent example of such leadership. He sometimes spoke to the people several times a day. Unfortunately, with time, especially after the Fatherland war, these Leninist traditions were largely forgotten. Some members of the Politburo of the CC and the government let years pass before visiting enterprises and kolkhozes, did not converse with workers, did not speak to them at public forums. Among local leaders there were also men who fenced themselves off from the masses in their offices, who forgot the way to the plants and the kolkhozes. In a number of organizations, ideological work amidst the masses was relegated to "professional" propagandists who often knew little about the economic problems and the way of life of the workers.

The situation has radically changed. For many leaders, the work of propaganda, of association with the people is a vital need. Good examples of this are the members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Party, the members of the government and Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev. His close contacts with the masses, profound knowledge of the

life of the people, his indefatigableness and immense capacity for work command the heartfelt gratitude of all Soviet people. Others who have begun to make regular appearances before the workers are the secretaries of obkoms, gorkoms and raykoms of the CPSU, the Soviet and the economic aktiv.

It is also a joy to know that the forms of ideological work have become more varied, flexible, responsive to the needs of the workers. It is known that cliches and monotony are particularly intolerable in the field of propaganda and agitation. V.I. Lenin pointed out more than once that political work could not be conducted according to a stereotype, that in this field it is impossible to determine everything in advance and to prescribe according to schedule.

Many Party organizations have the correct Leninist approach to the nature and methods of ideological work and try to perfect them. Of immense political importance are the ever more widely held meetings of workers, question and answer sessions, Leninist readings, raids designed to check organization of labor and the conditions at the place of work, regular production conferences, meetings of advanced brigades, meetings of young production workers with the innovators and the advance guard of workers, with veterans of the October Revolution and the Civil and Great Fatherland Wars, news reports given personally or broadcast, fireside chats on topics of Communist morality, motion-picture news, humorous leaflets, evening university courses, political information, amateur theatricals and a great deal else.

Experience accumulated in the course of ideological work is our most valuable possession. But we must generalize it and make wide use of it as we introduce it into all the Party organizations.

However, it would be a great mistake to become complacent, to assume that everthing is going smoothly and without a hitch in propaganda and agitation.

The 21st Party Congress has noted that ideological work in many Party organizations falls behind the growing problems of Communist construction, that it contains many formalistic and dogmatic elements. There are also some Party organizations in which political studies, symposia, reports and lectures have a purely educational nature; they are divorced from the concrete problems facing the oblast, the city, the district, the enterprise and the kolkhoz.

Individual lecturers and propagandists tend to interpret the theoretical problems of Communist construction in an oversimplified manner. Moreover, often, the same report or lecture is prepared for all the categories of the population from housewives to scientists. Few popular lectures are given for the benefit of workers and kolkhoz members.

Large segments of the intelligentsia and the Soviet public, are still seldom called upon to do educational work. Propaganda and agitation often are unsystematic and meant only as a display; individual work with people is badly organized.

We are obliged to work indefatigably to raise the standards of propaganda and agitation, and to consider them as a constantly effective factor in the battle for Communism. V.I. Lenin said: "And if we ever thought that we paid too much attention to propaganda, I should like to say that we need do one hundred times as much." (Works Vol. 30, p.175)

Our entire spoken and published ideological activity is called upon to propagandize the greatness of the goals of the Seven-Year Plan in a consistent and extensive manner, to arouse and organize the workers of the city and the countryside to work for Communism, to put into life the measures worked out by the Party designed to continue the development of the national economy, to increase the production of metal and machinery, the mining of oil and gas, the production of grain and meat, clothes and footwear. Resolutely to expose all kinds of distortions and deviations from the principles of Marxism-Leninism, to speak up against an alien ideology, to censure intriguers, informers, disseminators of false rumors, Philistines -- all those who hinder the building of a new life.

* * *

Never yet has our Party mapped out so many bold plans of economic and cultural building as it is doing for the coming seven-year period. This majestic program stuns the imagination, fills the hearts of Soviet men with pride for their Party, for the socialist regime and for our nation. The ideological workers of every Party organization should do everything, use all the means of propaganda and agitation at their command, to raise the Communist consciousness of the masses to the level of the monumental tasks of the building of Communism outlined by the 21st Party Congress.

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